



How to Be an Ally to LGBT People

- Use the words *lesbian* and *gay* instead of *homosexual*. The overwhelming majority of lesbians and gay men do not identify with or use the word *homosexual* to describe themselves.
- Use non-gender specific language. Ask, “Are you seeing someone?” or “Are you in a committed relationship?” instead of “Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?” or “Are you married?” Use the word “partner” or “significant other” instead of “boyfriend/girlfriend” or “husband/wife.”
- Do not assume the sexual orientation of another person even when that person is married or in a committed relationship. Many bisexuals are in heterosexual relationships.
- Do not assume that a lesbian, gay, or bisexual person is attracted to you because they disclosed their sexual orientation. If any interest is shown, be flattered, not flustered. Treat any interest that someone might show just as you would if it came from someone who is heterosexual.
- Challenge your own conceptions about gender-appropriate roles and behaviors. Do not expect people to conform to society’s beliefs about “women” and “men.”
- Validate people’s gender expression. For example, if a male-born person identifies as female, refer to that person as “she” and use her chosen name. If you are unsure how to refer to a person’s gender, simply ask that person.
- Speak out against statements and jokes that attack LGBT people. Letting others know that you find anti-LGBT statements and jokes offensive and unacceptable can go a long way toward reducing homophobia.
- Educate yourself about LGBT history, culture, and concerns. Read LGBT publications such as Tucson’s *Rubyfruit Journal* and *Observer News*. See movies that are by and about LGBT individuals. Attend LGBT events.
- Support and involve yourself in LGBT organizations and causes. Donate money or volunteer time to LGBT organizations, such as Wingspan ☺. Write letters to your political representatives, requesting they support legislation that positively affects LGBT people. March in an LGBT Pride Parade.